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Please amend the claims as follows:

C² ~~A~~-12. (Amended) A cross-linked hyaluronic acid according to Claim 17 wherein the hydroxy groups are sulphated or hemi-succinylated. ~~A~~-

~~A~~-14. (Amended) A metal complex of a cross linked hyaluronic acid according to Claim 17 in which the metal is selected from zinc, copper or iron. ~~A~~-

C³ ~~A~~-15. (Amended) A pharmaceutical composition useful as (a) a substitute for synovial fluid in the treatment of osteoarthritic conditions and for vitreous humor in the treatment of pathologies and side effects connected to ophthalmic surgery; (b) as a base for artificial tears formulation; (c) as a controlled release matrix of a medicament; and (d) as a healing and anti-adhesive agent, in which the principal active ingredient is a cross-linked hyaluronic acid according to Claim 17. ~~A~~-

Please cancel Claims 1-4, 13 and 16.

REMARKS

A reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

New Claim 17 is presented in independent form to clearly define the preferred embodiment of the invention, It has further been drafted in a manner to address the Section 112, para. 2 objection setforth in Paras. 2 and 3 of the Office Action. Claims 12, 14 and 15 have been amended so as to be dependent from new Claim 17 while Claims 1-4, 13 and 16 have been cancelled. It is submitted that the claims remaining of record are free of